

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 2, 2011

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 - STAFF UPDATES

ISSUE: Staff update to Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the staff update.

- A. **POTOMAC YARD METRO STATION:** As part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, the City with the Federal Transit Administration and Washington Metro Transit Authority and the National Park Service held two public scoping meetings on February 11, 2011. Approximately 120 members of the public attended and commented on the project scope. There was general support for the project and many attendees were able to learn about the project and the process. Concerns were raised about impact to wetlands, desire to continue exploring the options on the west side of the rail line, desire to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities to access the station, desire to ensure a connection from the Potomac Greens development, and concern about potential construction traffic through Potomac Greens. Materials from the meeting and on the project are available on the project website, www.potomacyardmetro.com. The public comment period is until March 15, 2011.
- B. **TRANSITWAY CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY:** The Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study is currently being conducted by the City of Alexandria for the purpose of investigating the feasibility of implementing dedicated corridor transit service in the city in three corridors – US 1 (Corridor A), Duke Street (Corridor B), and Van Dorn/Beauregard (Corridor C). The overall project is preliminarily anticipated to be complete by late 2011 with an accelerated schedule for Corridor C anticipated for completion by May / June 2011.

Work continues to be focused on the development of transitway concepts for Corridor C (Beauregard / Van Dorn). Since the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group meeting on January 20, staff have been working with the consultant to narrow down alternatives to be further analyzed using second level screening criteria. Staff held an internal workshop with the consultant on February 10, and the following alternatives were identified for further review.

- Alternative D: Bus Rapid Transit connecting to the Pentagon and Shirlington

- Alternative E: Bus Rapid Transit connecting to the Pentagon and Streetcar in Mixed Flow connecting to Beauregard Town Center
- Alternative G: Streetcar in Dedicated Lanes connecting to Columbia Pike

A preliminary preferred alternative for Corridor C is anticipated by April 2011. In the meantime, the consultant will begin analyzing existing conditions for Corridors A (North-South) and B (Duke Street) over the next month, and begin to develop preliminary transitway concepts for those corridors in March. Information on the project, and the January 20 meeting can be found at the project webpage:

www.alexandriava.gov/highcapacitytransit

- C. **BRAC-133 UPDATE:** The Transportation Research Board (TRB), an arm of the National Academy of Science, released their report on "Federal Funding of Transportation Improvements in BRAC Cases". This report supports DoD funding of road improvements and transit outside the boundaries of bases, and encourages a more cooperative relationship between the DoD and local governments in assessing off-base transportation impacts of BRAC facilities. The TRB report also recommends changes to the Defense Access Road (DAR) rules to allow expenditure of funds in more urban settings. This is a highly significant proposal that could free up funding for Short and Mid-term Road Improvements needed to mitigate BRAC-133.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recently announced an updated plan for transportation improvements to reduce congestion and improve the traffic circulation within the I-95/I-395 corridor. The plans include several changes that will benefit the City of Alexandria.

- VDOT plans on constructing a new, single-lane, reversible ramp to connect the existing HOV lanes on I-395 to Seminary Road. This ramp will provide a critical link between expanded regional transit and HOV networks to the growing Mark Center site, where BRAC-133 is scheduled to relocate later this year. The ramp will only be open to HOV and transit. Construction of the ramp is slated to begin in early 2012.
- The HOT lanes project will not include originally planned construction of six miles of HOV/HOT lanes on I-395 in Alexandria or Arlington County, a plan that Alexandria's elected officials opposed.
- The HOT lanes will end at Edsall Road, keeping the HOV-only lanes in Alexandria in place and avoiding changes to the Shirlington interchange.
- VDOT will provide funding to support these improvements, coupled with substantial investments from the private sector for the HOV/HOT Lanes project.

At this past Saturday's meeting, Alexandria City Council heard a detailed presentation from VDOT on their plans to fund the proposed ramp from the I-395 HOV lanes to Seminary Road. After the presentation, Council endorsed Alternative F, which will take traffic to the upper level of the Seminary Road interchange (diagram attached). VDOT asked that Alternative G (which would be much more expensive, and take longer to construct) be eliminated from further consideration. Alternative F is the alternative favored by VDOT.

I-395 / Seminary Road Direct Access Ramp - Alternative F

